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RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Written statement submitted by International Educational Development, Inc., a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1295 (XLIV).

[24 February 1994]

The rights of the child

1. International Educational Development/Humanitarian Law Project brings to the attention of the Commission the situation of children in the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

2. According to statistics gathered for the period July 1991 to November 1993, in the Republic of Croatia there have been 171 children killed and 712 wounded. Most of the children killed were from eastern Slavonia (51 per cent) and Dalmatia (23 per cent). Forty-three children are severely permanently disabled and another 12 have required amputation of a limb.

3. A total of 4,056 children have been left with only one parent and 44 have lost both parents. An additional 86,000 children are displaced and more than 140,000 are refugees. As a further result of the war, there are more and more children without needed social and medical services.

4. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the situation of children is even worse, especially because there, children must depend almost entirely on humanitarian aid from the international community. Supply of needed aid is constantly endangered because of the day-to-day realities of a war zone.

5. Ninety-one per cent of Bosnian children are exposed to shooting and an estimated 40 per cent have witnessed a death or wounding of another person; 80 per cent of Bosnian children think that they will die within a year due to the wars.

6. The psychological damage from this war will affect these children throughout their lives. Whereas adults can learn to place the horrors and hardships of war in some perspective, children are far more vulnerable and usually unable to develop constructive coping mechanisms.

7. International Educational Development/Humanitarian Law Project appeals to the international community to take adequate measures to assist the children of all wars, and especially those of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We urge the international community to ensure that psychologists and psychiatrists receive training in war trauma of children. We urge provision of medical teams to treat the physical wounds of war as soon as possible so that the process of rehabilitation can begin. Finally, we urge the international community to assist the Governments of this region to provide long-term programmes, including adoption in the best interest of the children and enriched education opportunities.

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